



Men Against Violence Against Women

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Date: Sunday, 12th May 1996

Our Ref: mavaw/H2

Your Ref:

*The Honourable John Humphrey,
Minister,
Ministry of Housing and Settlements,
NHA Building,
South Quay,
PORT OF SPAIN*

**SUBJECT: CONTRIBUTION TO
THE COUNTRY REPORT—
HABITAT II CONFERENCE—
ISTANBUL—TURKEY.**

Dear Sir,

Let me first express my sincere gratitude for being able to participate in this most important planning discussion, which included two days of ***Horizontal Dialogue***, at the Hotel Normandie.

Secondly, I extend compliments to you and your team, for producing a forward-looking, sensitive and well-presented **Country Report**.

In my view, said **Report** could well be the most articulate one in Istanbul next month, having focused on the **three (3)** essential areas of **Settlement Planning**, namely: -

- ***Design***
- ***Construction and***
- ***Social Concerns.***

My twenty-two (22) years in **Housing/Settlement Research**, constrains me to note the following **Twelve (12) Points**. Said **Points**, giving further proof to the claim of **“wide cross-section collaboration”** noted in the **Report’s Introduction** at page three (3), **section 1**. {During the 22 years Research, sixteen (16) years maintained a collaborative link with the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus; lecturing on the Subject Interior Design and Decoration for the Extra-Mural Department, now the School of Continuing Studies and producing the large Campus Exhibitions of the Period.}

Point 1. The history of Trinidad and Tobago reveal some exciting ***Social and Cultural Landmarks*** which could stimulate **Tourist**, interest if included in the **Introduction Section** or expanded upon in the verbal Presentation.

Point 2. In **Section 3.2**, The **National Physical Development Plan Strategy to the year 2000**, appears to have been most successful with its **Socio-economic Component**, as evidenced by: -

1. ***The three (3) Government changes over a period of fourteen (14) years, peacefully.***
2. ***The present division in our Political System.***
3. ***The most recent Habitat II—Media and Information Encounter—Shelter For All.***

Point 3. What appears to be missing from being mentioned within **Section 3.2, Sub-section C**, **“Existing Land Management Initiatives”**, but has been developed anyway in the Nation are: -

1. The Waste Recycle Management Initiatives by the Solid Waste Management Company Limited.
2. The collaborative efforts, originating from the University's Campus in St. Augustine, since the first showing of their wares in **April of 1989**, with the **TETRAD Exhibition**. Said efforts seeking to address the **Social and Construction Concerns**, of our teething pains, in **Shelter and Settlement Development** viz.: -
 - a. *Crime.*
 - b. *Gender Equity.*
 - c. *Hurricane Resistant Housing and*
 - d. *Interior Design and Decoration (this initiative being an essential component of the Extra Mural Department now School of Continuing Studies and having a much longer history than the first three a, b and c, immediately above-mentioned).*

Point 4. Section 3.3, Land Use, notes that thirty-four percent (34)% of our land acreage is devoted to **Agriculture**, but our **Annual Budgets** have continuously shown an astronomically **high food bill for imports**. This suggests that until we can effectively feed ourselves by using this **34%**, we must in the **Short Term**, mandate by Deed Stipulations, to all Beneficiaries of housing land, that a percentage (%) of said land, be used for **Agricultural Production**. Community Based Organisations can manage the Collection and Distribution of this new initiative, aptly titled "**Shelter Agriculture**". In addition, to consolidate the current concept of "**Green Architecture**", our **Commercial Construction Projects**, must at every Floor Level, be designed to provide for a percentage (%) of **Agricultural Use**, managed by Staff Co-operatives. **Such Construction and any High Rise Development to be of a non-confrontational type, a "Natural Growth Architectural Principle"**.

Point 5. In the Historical Review at **Section 4 page 7**, the major actors in the **Sector** have concentrated on, construction of housing units and infrastructure, in order to satisfy demand. The **new Policy** will obviously correct this, as the housing equation has since been understood to include, efficient designs and social concerns.

It should be noted here though, that the **NGO's** claim to fame does not belong in the provision of housing as stated, financial constraints explained, but in bringing to the attention of the National Community, the equal importance of the other two (2) elements in **Settlement Development**, namely, **Design and Sociology**. This claim humbly acknowledges the co-operation of a miniscule section of the Architectural Fraternity and a steadily growing, aggressive few on the University's Campus in St. Augustine.

Point 6. Under **Section 4.2**, during the second shift of Government's emphasis on Settlements, "Community Development/Revitalisation" was highlighted as the mechanism to address the **Social Concerns of Settlement Development**. The **new Policy** has shown an aggressive awareness of this sub-programme to Shelter, i.e. Settlement and National Development, alongside a healthy respect for the NGO Community.

This scenario promises an exciting period of our **Democratic Growth**. With greater use being made of our **Human and Capital Resources**, on and off the University's Campus, under a **Human Resource Management Policy**, which encompasses the "**Full Cycle Of Human Development**," our example of **Settlement Development** may well bring the first **Nobel Prize** to a small Island State.

Point 7. Under **Section 5, Best Practices**, we need to address the misconception that architects "**sell designs**" as opposed to "**provide solutions to space problems**." The manner in which the majority of practicing architects have dispensed Architecture as a Service in the past, has contributed in the most part, to this misconception. The harmony between **recipients** of architectural services and the rest of the **National Community**, is intimately hinged on the **concept** that, "in any specific discipline, service to humanity is of first importance."

We will continue to have **non-completion** of **Plans and Programmes**, until **Architectural Service** is dispensed with analysis, understanding, problem solving and monitoring, maintaining accessibility as a priority. **Nomination**, the right to use a **Title** after your name and **Licensing**, the right to be the **sole provider of a Service**, will only be equitable and meaningful when “love for all humanity is placed before love for self.”

The magnitude of this **Paradigm Shift** is made obvious when we look at the **numbers**. In Trinidad and Tobago we have sixty-five (65) **Registered Architects**, who are available to service a population of over **1.2 million persons**, i.e.

- *1 Architect per 18,000 persons,*
- *At a Service Rate of one (1) job per year,*
- *1 Architect has must live for 18,000 years and that does not include population growth.*

The solution lies in the **Development and Practice** of “Natural Growth Architecture”, which links **Service with Training** in a manner that allows “**Horizontal Dialogue**” with the National Community, in a never ending fulfilling devotion, another **Principle** in this **Concept of NGA**

Point 8. Under **Section 5.3**, the practice of Public and Private Sector Partnership, will be continued under the **new Policy** and rightly so. However, in my view, the State must retain the responsibility to conduct and compile **Research**, whilst co-coordinating the development of Housing/Shelter Community Co-operatives and Community Based Organisations.

Point 9. In addition, all **mass housing providers** should not only be seen as willing and capable to design Housing Units for Low Income Earners. A **system** should be in place to allow our trained professionals, in the **Public Service** particularly, to expose their expertise to the rich section of Society, as long as there is no conflict of interest; the Numbers dictate such a consideration. (1 architect per 18,000 persons).

Basically, the established Authority on Housing and Settlements in any Society, must relate to: -

1. *Existing Stock, both Formal and Informal, i.e. (planned and unplanned)*
2. *Proposed Stock, designs completed and being approved.*
3. *Future stock,*

Whilst providing and allowing **Solutions** that recognizes the usable existing Natural Growth Experiences, emanating from both planned and unplanned Developments.

Point 10. This innovative composition of the **Joint Consultative Council** still exposes an **opening** for the “**Construction End Organisations**” i.e. one hosting: -

1. *Interior Designers.*
2. *Furniture Producers.*
3. *Landscapers.*
4. *Artists and Accessories Suppliers.*

The **Council** could be encouraged to try and fill this **opening** and should also become **user-friendlier**.

Point 11. It is refreshing to note, that in the **new Policy**, Gender Issues will be given its just due. The fact that **women** are generally confined to enclosed spaces for ninety-five percent (95%) of the day, combined with the ever-growing realization of the importance of the **Home Management Function** in continuing our existence as a **Civilization**: demands extreme caution in achieving efficiency in **Design Solutions**.

Consequently, the **Male Function** in the Home as Co-parent has to be instructed in the light of our Socio-economic experiences, with the importance of positive **Male Role Modeling**, emphasized vigorously. The **Orientation of Masculinity** must guide our **Males** to be as good a **Protector** and **Provider** as we are **Reproducers**.

Point 12. In support of your conviction Mr. Minister that because of our small size and unique growth pattern, we will eventually see a fusion of Rural and Urban Developments, with identifiable Agricultural Communities. Let me suggest that in the next Review of the **Proposed Urban and Regional Planning Act**, the word “**Ruban**” be used to designate the “**fusion.**”

My two (2) **peripheral** and **final comments** are as follows: -

1. The “**Horizontal Dialogue**” as underlined in the **new Policy** has already started, most recent example, the **Media Encounter** at the Normandie. What has to be done to maintain and develop it is as follows: -
 - a. Commence **dialogue** on **Reports** before they are submitted to their destination in the finished form.
 - b. During **dialogue**, greater respect should be shown for the **Floor Participation**, when doing **Reviews and Press Releases**.
 - c. Suggested **Expert Speakers and Ministers** should indicate their availability to spend at least one (1) **day** at the **Conference**, before their invitation is confirmed. This would allow participants to access these “**Experts**” and allow such “**Experts**” to evaluate the **Inputs** from the **Floor**.
2. A little Introduction to Istanbul and Turkey would have revealed some interesting facts.

The above **12-Point Contribution** will form part of my **Presentation in the NGO Forum**, if I am **selected and funded** to attend as a member of the Non-Governmental Organisation “Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW).”

Signed.....Donald Berment, Secretary, MAVAW

Yours In Nation Building

Company No M 1799(95) Charitable Status No F (BUD):7/4/205

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P.O.R.O.